Acknowledgments

Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.

—Søren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter, vol. 18, ed. Søren Kierkegaard Research Center, translation adapted from Julia Watkin, in Jørgen Jørgensen, "Source of Søren Kierkegaard's Quote"

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I believe the purpose of life is to love and be loved. I find meaning in the pursuit of that purpose. My experiences in the Nordics revealed how the systems and structures of Nordic capitalism expand freedom and opportunity, enabling more people to pursue their purpose – however they define it.

Throughout this book, I offer personal reflections to ground its ideas in lived experience and to invite deeper understanding through self-reflection, in the spirit of engaged scholarship. As AI-generated content becomes more widespread, I believe we will increasingly value

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scholarship in which authors reflect on their position in relation to their research and connect their lived, human experiences to it with humanism and humility. This is something artificial intelligence, for all its incredible capacity, cannot genuinely offer.

Realizing sustainable capitalism will require humanism and humility – a recognition that we are beneficiaries of systems larger than ourselves, that we share a responsibility to act with empathy as stewards of our planet and societies, and that – even in the face of daunting challenges – the work ahead can be a joyful and hopeful pursuit.

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